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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION KUWAIT AUGUST 14-16: TERRORISM; IRAQ;
RENEWED FIGHTING WITH AL-SADR

1. SUMMARY: While hand-wringing over the origins and motives of as many as 20 Kuwaiti extremists arrested for suspicion of al-Qaeda ties and terrorist plots, the fighting in Najaf rose as the primary topic of discussion in the Kuwaiti media. Some commentators saw an insidious Iranian influence in the uprising and applauded the crackdown. Others saw the U.S. response as proof of America's nefarious and hegemonic designs on Iraq and the Muslim world. Dr. Sami Naser Khalifa wrote in independent al-Rai al-Aa'm (8/14): "Yes, the people of Najaf in particular, and Iraqis in general, made a mistake when they regarded the fall of the former Iraqi regime as a good omen. They totally forgot that Saddam was the American administration's foster son." END SUMMARY.

2. "They Connive but God Knows Best"

Dr. Sami Naser Khalifa wrote in independent al-Rai al-Aa'm (8/16): "The American aggression on the city of Najaf, the desecration of its holy sites, the killing and wounding and committing massacres against its civilian population, is proof that the American administration is the number one enemy of Arabs in the region. It is America that the world must look upon not only with resentment and anger, but also with contempt and derision. In addition, the current Iraqi 'shadow' government, bursting at the seams with former Ba'athists, is the subservient tool with which America intends to subdue the will of the Iraqis, and the means by which the American occupation will liquidate its enemies and opponents."

3. "War of the Cemeteries"

Dr. Abdel Muhsin Jamal wrote in independent al-Qabas (8/14): "One of the most repugnant paradoxes, is when the world reacts differently to similar events. When Jewish graves are desecrated in France, the whole world rises up in condemnation. However, when American tanks run through Dar al-Salaam cemetery in Najaf, considered the oldest and biggest cemetery in the Middle East, nobody raises even a token complaint. Had this cemetery belonged to Jews, would the Americans have dared to storm through it?"

4. "The Exploited"

Salah al-Fadhli wrote in independent al-Rai al-Aa'm (8/15): "Those who sympathize with those arrested for allegedly recruiting youth to fight a holy war in Iraq believe the suspects were deceived, and were unaware of what they were doing. Instead of resorting to such unrealistic justifications, we must admit there are those who strongly believe that to fight the Americans is a mandatory religious obligation, a belief based on rulings or Fatwas by radical Islamists."

5. "Yes... the People of Najaf Made a Mistake"

Dr. Sami Naser Khalifa wrote in independent al-Rai al-Aa'm (8/14): "Free Iraq, the model that Bush wants to implement on the Middle East, took yet another turn of derision toward disappointment. American tanks, fighter planes and heavy artillery are flooding the city of Najaf, causing the deaths of hundreds of people. The people of Najaf are subjected to extreme sorts of humiliation, insult and degradation from an occupying power that has historically proven it is the one and infinite enemy to all peoples. Yes, the people of Najaf in particular, and Iraqis in general, made a mistake when they regarded the fall of the former Iraqi regime as a good omen. They totally forgot that Saddam was the American administration's foster son."

6. "Looking for Answers"

Dr. Shamlan al-Issa wrote in independent al-Seyassah (8/14): "It is difficult to understand Muqtada al-Sadr's position when he calls for immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq. This demand would have been easy to accept had his troops concentrated their attacks against the coalition forces. But, it is not conceivable that killing civilians and Iraqi Christians will achieve Iraq's liberation, or the kidnapping of expatriates and all who strive to rebuild Iraq. Since the Shia in Iraq constitute a majority, it is in their interest to hold free elections where all political groups and parties compete democratically. All Arab countries must help the present Iraq government, and stop foreign infiltration into Iraq from neighboring countries."

7. "Iraq on the Verge of Collapse"

Sami Abdel Latif al-Nisif wrote in independent al-Anba (8/16): "Whoever chose Iraq to be a model for re-drawing the map of the region knew very well what they were doing. Iraq boasts complete

anarchy, political insanity rooted in the minds of various political leaders and intellectual elites. Moreover, the prevalence of complete public dissatisfaction about the general state of affairs in Iraq makes the situation even worse... the failure of the present government to control the al-Sadr militias will mean loss of control over other Iraqi cities and governorates, thus paving the way for the possible division of Iraq."

18. "No Alternative to the New Iraq"

Editor in chief Ahmad al-Jarallah wrote in independent al-Seyassah (8/16): "At the present time, Najaf is being subjected to a purging to flush out all those who have forcibly entered this holy city and were sent by a foreign power solely out of self-interest. It is obvious Muqtada al-Sadr is not the one actually leading the al-Mahdi Army. Rather, the ones who are controlling this army are located to the east of Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr is a political scapegoat, exploited to serve other countries' bidding. There is no alternative to the new Iraq. All who oppose this want to establish a state led by al-Sader and backed by Iran."

19. "The In and Out of the U.S."

Abdel Amir al-Turki wrote in independent al-Seyassah (8/14): "Muqtada al-Sadr cannot win even if he accepts the Iraqi government's proposal, because he doesn't have enough public support to guarantee that he becomes a member of the current Iraqi political elite. Realizing this weak point, the Iranians supported and armed al-Sadr, in hopes of reaching two important goals: first, the rehabilitation of al-Sadr on a popular level by encouraging him to fight Americans; second, excluding him from the presumed negotiations with Washington."

110. "Allawi and the Point of No Return"

Abdel Amir al-Turki wrote in independent al-Seyassah (8/15): "PM Allawi has embarked on a project to build a free democratic Iraq, despite strong local opposition. He has no other option but to keep fighting these forces until the very end. As for the Iranians, it is the Americans whom they look upon as their greatest enemy, and al-Sadr is just a pawn that is utilized to fight this enemy. PM Allawi would do well to eliminate al-Sadr, thus cutting off Iran's influence in the south. Given such circumstances, Allawi must capture al-Sadr, and impose his government's control over the whole of Iraq. Reaction to al-Sadr's capture will be short-lived, since he does not represent any clerical authority, which would otherwise allow him to lead."

111. "Thoughts From Najaf"

Abdel Muhsin Jamal wrote in independent al-Qabas (8/16): "The Bush administration is no longer able to lead a free world. A violence complex and the use of excessive power toward everything beset it after 9/11. This mindset is no longer viable to run peace in the world. It is in America's interest, and that of the rest of the world, that America be removed from the political scene, so that perhaps a new mindset can create a new America that can deal with the concept of global peace. Will the American people go for that? Wait and see."

112. "We Need Anti-terrorism Legislation"

Ali al-Baghli wrote in independent al-Qabas (8/14): "The phenomena of fundamentalist terrorism is prevalent in our society, especially when a terrorist sacrifices his life by killing himself and taking hundreds of innocent victims in his wake. Such incidents cannot be accepted as isolated actions of a few individuals. Whoever believes this is either ignorant of such terrorism, or does not want to admit the pervasiveness of terrorism, and is a sympathizer with its ideology. Therefore, we appeal to all those who love this country, we need up-to-date anti-terrorism legislation."

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